

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 01 DECEMBER 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Financial Crimes Commission Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill would be, inter alia, to provide for the establishment of the Financial Crimes Commission which would be the apex agency in Mauritius to detect, investigate and prosecute financial crimes, such as corruption offences, money laundering offences, fraud offences, the financing of drug dealing offences and any other ancillary offence connected thereto.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill would be to provide for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Bill would give effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international instruments to which Mauritius is a party, with a view to eliminating discrimination against persons with disabilities.

In addition, the Bill would provide for the establishment of the National Disability Authority which would take over the functions and powers of the Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund, the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board. Accordingly, the Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund Act, the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act and the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act would be repealed.

Furthermore, with a view to encouraging employment of persons with disabilities, the Bill would further provide for fiscal incentives to be given to employers who employ persons with disabilities.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Local Government (Amendment No. 2) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill would be to amend the Local Government Act to provide that the Office of a Municipal City Councillor, Municipal Town Councillor and Village Councillor shall become vacant on the date of publication of such vacancy in the Gazette, and to provide for matters connected and related thereto.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Supplementary Appropriation (2021-2022) (No. 2) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill would be to provide for supplementary appropriation, by votes of expenditure, both recurrent and capital, in respect of services of Government for financial year 2021-2022, in excess of the expenditure appropriated by the Appropriation (2021-2022) Act 2021, and the Supplementary Appropriation (2021-2022) Act 2022.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the 2020 Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission had been submitted to the Speaker of the National Assembly on 16 October 2020 and that the said Report was laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 03 November 2020. Cabinet has taken note that Government proposes to move a resolution in the National Assembly under section 39(4) of the Constitution.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Banking (Processing and Licence Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 as well as the Banking (Significant Interest Fees) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated.

The Banking (Processing and Licence Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 would provide for an increase in the processing fee payable to the Bank of Mauritius by an applicant in respect of a banking licence, a foreign exchange dealer licence, and a money changer licence.

As regards the Banking (Significant Interest Fees) Regulations 2023, a new processing fee would be introduced for an application made in respect of an acquisition of a significant interest in a financial institution under section 31 of the Banking Act.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated, so as to provide for the implementation of the tariff liberalisation commitments of Mauritius under the Mauritius-China Free Trade Agreement and other technical measures.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Income Tax (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated with effect from 01 July 2023, so as to amend the Income Tax Regulations 1996 to validate the PAYE formula applied by the Mauritius Revenue Authority on emoluments derived by employees as from July 2023 and provide for a number of consequential amendments.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the recommendations of the National Wage Consultative Council on its second review of the National Minimum Wage. Cabinet has also agreed that drafting instructions would be conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for the drafting of relevant regulations.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Port Louis Cruise Terminal at Les Salines would be inaugurated on Monday 11 December 2023. The new facility which can handle peaks of up to 4,000 passengers, comprises a Terminal building of steel structure with all associated facilities, a ground transportation area with more than 120 parking slots for cars, taxis and coaches as well as a dedicated service area for the handling of ships' stores and luggage transfer.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency relating to the "Development of a Web Geographic Information System for Environmental Planning". The Memorandum of Understanding would provide, inter alia, for -

- (a) the development and hosting of the Web Geographic Information System; and
- (b) capacity building of staff of key agencies.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the *Conservatoire National de Musique* François Mitterrand Trust Fund and the Centre of Learning, Caritas Ile Maurice, for a period of two years. The main objectives of the Memorandum of Cooperation would be to promote musical education as a means to, inter alia, help students of Barkly to achieve their potential in the musical field as well as to allow students to learn the use of individual musical instruments.

13. Cabinet has taken note that arrangements would be made by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping for the proclamation of the Fisheries Act 2023 to take effect as from 01 December 2023.

14. Cabinet has agreed to the Road Development Authority implementing a series of projects in the region of La Brasserie and La Marie-Pétrin-Chamouny Road, as recommended by the National Task Force Committee, in the context of the forthcoming Maha Shivaratree Festival 2024.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the National Development Unit implementing three projects as recommended by the Land Drainage Authority, namely –

- (a) the construction of drain and retaining wall at Camp Pierrot, Curepipe;
- (b) the construction of drain at Avenue Wellington (near Wellington Mosque), Rose Hill; and
- (c) flood mitigating measures at St Jean, Quatre Bornes.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the results of the National Certificate of Education (NCE) Assessment 2023. Out of the 14,527 school candidates of the Republic of Mauritius who took part in the NCE Assessment (Regular and Extended Programmes), 10,640 candidates of the Regular Programme have met the requirements for the NCE (86 percent), whilst 192 candidates of the Extended Programme have met the requirements for the NCE (8.9 percent).

There were 13,620 candidates who took part in the NCE Assessment 2023 in the Island of Mauritius, of whom 10,229 have met the NCE requirements. As for Rodrigues, 900 candidates took part in the NCE Assessment and 599 candidates have attained the requirements. In Agalega, out of the seven school candidates who took part in the NCE Assessment 2023, four have attained the NCE requirements.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) responded positively to the request of the Republic of Mauritius to establish a Country Programme with Mauritius. The Country Programme is a strategic tool which would allow the already very close cooperation between Mauritius and the OECD to flourish by supporting the reform programme already initiated by Mauritius. In addition, this partnership would open promising prospects for cooperation at the African regional level within the framework of the new Africa-OECD partnership.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council would organise an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit on 08 and 09 May 2024, followed by the Mauritius Emerging Technology Exhibition (METX 2024) from 09 to 12 May 2024.

The AI Summit would provide a platform for leading minds in AI and for a panel of ICT Ministers from the Sub-Saharan region to engage in meaningful policy dialogue, knowledge exchange and make value proposals on the way forward. As for the METX 2024, a flagship event and the first of its kind in Mauritius, it would be another pioneering event in the region, dedicated to showcasing the latest and most innovative and emerging technologies to a discerning Mauritian audience.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the following 10 sports disciplines have been retained for the *Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Océan Indien (CJSOI) Games 2025* -

- (a) Athletics (including Para Athletics);
- (b) Badminton;
- (c) Basketball;
- (d) Boxing;
- (e) Judo;
- (f) Football and Beach Soccer;

- (g) Swimming;
- (h) Volleyball;
- (i) Weightlifting; and
- (j) Yachting.

Cabinet has also taken note that youth activities would be included in the CJSOI Games 2025.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Civil Service Kermesse, initially scheduled for Sunday 10 December 2023, had been rescheduled to Sunday 17 December 2023.

21. Cabinet has taken note that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had been elected as host country of World Expo 2030 at the 173rd General Assembly of the *Bureau International des Expositions* (BIE) which was held recently in Paris. World Expo 2030 would be held between October 2030 and March 2031.

Cabinet has also taken note that during the 173rd General Assembly of the BIE, Mauritius was elected to the Executive Committee of the BIE for the term 2023-2025. The other members of the Executive Committee are Austria, Belgium, China, Greece, Haiti, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Türkiye and the USA.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the Mauritius Salt Intake Study 2023 carried out in August/September 2023 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with the Monash University of Australia, the University of Helsinki of Finland, and the Umea University of Sweden. The findings of the Mauritius Salt Intake Study 2023 provide clear evidence that Mauritians still consume more salt than the recommended daily amount.

23. Cabinet has taken note of progress achieved by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the implementation of the recommendations made in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry on maternal deaths in Mauritius. In this respect, a Technical Committee was set up at the level of that Ministry to examine those recommendations and to formulate proposals accordingly.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the Rodrigues Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Survey 2022 conducted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Commission for Health and Others of Rodrigues in collaboration with several international institutions, in October/November 2022. The overall objective of the Rodrigues NCD Survey was to determine the prevalence and study the trends in diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and their associated risk factors in the Rodriguan population.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the inclusion of Mauritius in the list of countries in respect of a Decree issued by the President of the Italian Council of Ministers on the Programming of Legal Entry Flows to Italy for foreign workers for the three-year period 2023-2025. The said Decree establishes a three-year immigration plan with a quota of 452,000 non-EU nationals permitted to enter Italy for work between 2023 and 2025.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security and Safety held on 16 November 2023 in Mauritius. The Conference adopted a Ministerial Declaration which, inter alia –

- (a) called for strengthened and effective collaboration with the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre for identification of vessels of interests and Regional Coordination of Operations Centre for co-ordination of intervention at sea, followed by inspection;
- (b) commended the collective work undertaken by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) to enhance preparedness at the regional level to respond effectively to marine pollution through the organisation of a Tabletop Exercise and Field Training Exercise in July and September 2023 respectively; and
- (c) commended the collaboration amongst TRAFFIC, Trade in Wildlife Information Exchange platforms, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the IOC, and the adoption of a Plan of Work in January 2023 at the regional meeting in Mauritius.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the second round of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which was recently held in the UAE. Discussions in the second round covered several topics, namely Market Access for Trade in Goods and Trade in Services, Intellectual Property Rights, Rules of Origin, Investment Facilitation, and Financial Services and Dispute Settlement.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance to Germany where he participated in the G20 Compact with Africa Investment Summit, hosted by the Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative of German Business.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance had a series of meeting with, inter alia, Ms S. Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms S. Dall'Omo, Chief Executive Officer of Siemens and President of Afrika-Verein, and other potential investors.

29. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Zambia, where he participated in the 44th Meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers (COM). The Meeting, inter alia, assessed progress made on the implementation of the COMESA programmes/projects, status of Member States' contribution to the Secretariat's budget, implementation of the new organisational structure of the Secretariat and audit and administrative matters.

In the margins of the COM, the Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had bilateral talks with various dignitaries, including the Hon Mrs Rebecca Miano, Cabinet Secretary, Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry of Kenya and with Hon Charles Milupi, Acting Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry of Zambia.

30. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent virtual participation of the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare to the 8th African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as well as to the Africa Pre-Commission on the Status of Women Ministerial Consultative Meeting in preparation for the 68th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). One of the main highlights of the Pre-CSW68 Ministerial Consultative meeting was the presentation of the Africa Outcome Document/Common Africa Position Paper together with its key messages.

The participating Ministers reached an agreement to set their priorities on areas of concern, namely taking the appropriate social, political and financial measures to address women's poverty, contributing to reforming the financial architecture and financial processes to be gender sensitive, and investing in women rights organisations.

31. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare to Azerbaijan, where she participated in the Non-Aligned Movement Conference on “Advancing the Rights and Empowerment of Women”. The purpose of the Conference was to give the Non-Aligned Movement Member States the privileged opportunity to reflect upon the commitments and deliberate on the way forward for achieving gender equality and empowering women globally.

32. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the seed sector in Mauritius and the measures that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was proposing, to provide additional impetus to this sector. These measures would include, inter alia -

- (a) the setting up of protected cultivation systems;
- (b) the enlargement of the Quality Declared Seed Scheme; and
- (c) the implementation of a soil enrichment programme.

33. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Mauritius Post Ltd with Mr Ranna Swamber, as part-time Chairperson.
